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THE
Loss of the Soul,
THE
IRREPARABLE LOSS,
Opened and Demonstrated,

- I. By the Excellency of the Soul.
II. The Utter Incompetency of the World to Answer it.
III. The Misery of a Soul Lost.
IV. The Eternal Sting of that Question *What shall a
Man give in Exchange for a Lost Soul?*

IN A
SERMON,
ON

MATT. XVI. 26.

*What shall it profit a Man, if he gain the whole World,
and lose his own Soul; or what shall a Man give in
exchange for his Soul?*

By T. BEVERLEY.

L O N D O N :

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and Dr. Owen's Works.

THE GREAT



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SEERMON

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TO THE

Honourable Gentlemen, Supporting the
Lords-Day Lecture in the Morning,
at Mr. Lobb's Meeting, near Fetter-
Lane, London.

THere is no Apology to be made (my very Honour'd)
for the Confidence of my presenting this Sermon to
you, but the Transcendent Weight and Excellency
of the Subject; and that wherever this Discourse
comes, your giving such Encouragement to the Preaching the
Gospel of Christ, on which occasion this Sermon was
Preached, may be spoken of by it in Memorial of you,
and of my own Grateful Sense of my participation of your
Favour and Good-will therein, who Acknowledg my self most
unworthy of any such. I Acknowledg, I have Darkened the
Counsels of so Great a Truth by Words without Knowledg;
But who is sufficient for it according to its Dignity? The Se-
crets of this Wildom are double to All can be said of it;
But if there be any Thing spoken with the Evidence of Di-
vine Truth, or in Any Measure (through Gracious Assistance)
Worthy of it, or Acceptable to any of the Servants of Christ,
or your selves in particular; I desire most Humbly, it may
by a proportion of Acceptance, be Transferred to the Do-
ctrine of the Kingdom of Christ, and the Line of Time to
it, I have so laboured in; yet not I, but the Grace of Christ
with me; For, if the Lord hath enabled his unworthiest Ser-
vant to speak in this Great Point aright, and according to
His Word, and the Divine Reason of it, I hope it will hence

appear, He hath Enabled me to give Good Heed to what I have spoken, and whereof I have Affirm'd, and on what grounds I have so Affirm'd concerning the Great Revolution of the Kingdom of Christ, so near as 1697. and which I cannot but Humbly Look upon, as that Especial Dispensation committed to me, and therein I magnify my Office. And so I commend All to Divine Influence, and Blessing, Preparing by this Discourse for his Kingdom, and Assuring it thereby to us; And for all Blessings, and most Gracious Presence of God with you in all your Stations, Actions, and Conditions, especially in Heavenly Places, and Things are the most unfeigned Supplications of,

Honoured Gentlemen,

Your Most Humble Servant in

that Everlasting Kingdom.

T. BEVERLET.

THE

THE
G R E A T N E S S
OF THE
Loss of a Soul :

AND THAT

There can be no Exchange found for it.

M A T T. XVI. 26.

For what is a Man Profited, if He Gain the whole World, and Lose his own Soul? or what shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?

THIS Great Oracle of our Lord and Master, is indeed one of the chief *Bases*, or Foundations of the Doctrine of Christianity; It is one of the Pillars, the *Seven Pillars*, on which *Wisdom* hath Founded its House, viz. That there is no Comparison between the *whole World*, and the value and worth of an Immortal Spirit, considered, as in an Immortal State and Condition; an Immortal, Unchangeable, and Everlasting *Self* : So that if a Man could Gain the *whole World* with the loss of this *Self*, he could be no Gainer, because that which should enjoy all, is lost. And further, He must be a loser beyond all we can conceive or express; for he will come to Rue, or dearly to Repent this Loss: He will come even Eternally

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nally to cry out, *What shall I give in exchange, or as a price of Redemption for my Lost Soul?* though I lost it for a *whole World* gain'd by that loss?

This is express'd by our Lord, in so plain and familiar a way, and so shooting of it self into the Universal Sense, and Apprehension of Mankind, Every one can weigh at this Scale and by this Beam, and cast this Account; *If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thy self; But if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it, Prov. 9.* Our great unhappiness is this, That we have not, as I may call it, a Vital sense, and Apprehension of it; such a one, as that is, by which we Apprehend, State, and Value, or rather immediately feel, and are touch'd to the quick (as we say) in all the concernments of the present Life, and self preservation in it.

This Sense we cannot have, but from the *Spirit of Truth, leading into All Truth*, by giving us a Vital Union to it, and with it; for tho' it be spoken Ten Thousand times to us; tho' we cannot deny it; tho' we praise the Discourses of it; yet we shall not else perceive such Dints, and Impressions, such alway accompanying Powers of it, as to Act according to it: Yet that I may present this Discourse with all the advantages of Address I can by Divine Assistance extend it to, and on which I most humbly pray the Benediction of the Father of *Lights, of Spirits*. I will first, by way of Preparation, and Entrance, Consider these Four Things:

1. Who is He, that hath here spoken these words to all the World, to the whole Human Nature, especially to all that are called Christians, and among them, more especially to those, who are indeed his *Friends*, as he calls them in a like speech, *Luke 12. What is a Man profited, if he gain, &c.* It is even He, that as He is the great Lover of Souls, so He is the great Purchaser and Redeemer of them; He that had computed, and knew the value of Souls, when He came to dye for them, to Humble Himself to the death of the Cross, He weighed with Himself, what was the worth of these Immortal Beings, for which he came to dye; For as it is said of Abner, *Died Abner as a Fool dieth?* Died He upon a small or trivial an Account? How much more may we say of the *Lord of Life and Glory*? Did He come to dye on any low account? He knew what He came to dye for; He knew what the Immortal state of Spirits is; the Greatness of the Happiness on one side, of the Misery on the other

other. He knew then the Souls of all Men; of all that are now before him; He knew in a peculiar manner the Souls of his own, what the Misery was He Redeemed them from, and the Happiness also He Ransomed them into. Now in the view, and survey of all this, and as giving the Account, as Solomon speaks in another Case; which His Soul had sought and found, He spake these words? *What shall it profit a Man, if he gain the whole World, and lose his Soul; and if he looses his Soul, What shall he give in exchange for it?*

We deferr this to every Wise and Honest Man; We allow this Honour to him, that He is able to speak of the Things wherein he deals, according to their true worth and value. We give this Credit to Merchants that deal in Foreign Commodities; to any great Purchaser; we look upon his Judgment, and estimate as a Standard: Now He that knew above any in Heaven or Earth the price of Souls; He who is the single and alone Purchaser of Them, (For as to any other, *The Redemption of Souls is Precious, and ceaseth for ever,*) said this. And he is not only the Purchaser, but the Creator and Supreme End of them, *They were all created by him, and for him.* Who then, as He, could Lift up his Hand, as it were, to Heaven, and say, *What shall it profit a Man, if he gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul; or what shall a Man give in exchange for it?* He saw, and searched it out, and declared it from his own certain knowledge in the making Souls; and from his Experience in the Purchase of them.

2. Let us observe, how our Lord lays us in one Scale whatever is highest, even the uttermost that can be supposed, tho' it never has, or shall be attained; He does not speak of a little thing, when he lays a Soul in the other Scale; but whatever can be supposed to Counter-sway, or Counter-balance a Soul; Suppose all the Honours, Profits, Pleasures of the World could be gained at the price of a Soul, whatever the Covetous or the Ambitious, or Proud, the Sensualist, or Voluptuary do, or would roll themselves in; Suppose a Man could have all this with all imaginable advantages; All this, saith our Lord, could not weigh against one Soul. We know, it is a very little of the World we adventure for, we engage our Souls for, There was never yet any Man that could say, He was Master of the whole World, and All Things in it; But suppose a Man could say, He had it, and upon the longest Term of Life, and at the highest Elevation, or Exaltation; yet if we believe Him, who

had all Reason to know it, All this were not to be named with a Soul: Nay, in Solomon's Judgment, they are not sufficient to defray the Charges of Life, the *Vanity* and *Vexation of Spirit* that press upon this Life, in this state of *Sin* and *Misery*, one may say, it is *Mortgaged under*.

3. The Foot of the Account, the Ballance of the Account, at the lowest that can be given, is this, That a *Man* would not be profited, if he should gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul; All that he got by it would amount to just nothing: Our Lord Conveys it therefore under the shade of a Man Adventuring upon the Sea, and getting how much soever can be supposed by the Adventure, and then his Life, Himself be cast away; suppose it were a World in his Arms, What would such a Man get? If that whereby we Taste, Enjoy, Take in, whatever can be given into our possession be lost; All that *whole World* becomes immediately nothing to him. For, whose then shall that World become? If Solomon says, *Seeing there are many things that increase vanity*, What is Man the better! How much more, if his *whole* becomes an absolute Cypher, a Nothing to him, What can *He* be the better? This is experimental Truth. The Devil truly said, *Skin for skin, all that a Man hath would he give for his Life*: This is true in the sense and verdict of Nature; God therefore, the Great Arbitrer of Life, hath this Bridle in the Mouth of the most *Atheistic*, the Fools, that say either in their Heart, or openly, *There is no God*, They are under this *Despotic Absolute Power*, whatever they call it, they must dye, and they cannot secure against, how soon! And this blanks all they can propose; *Their Breath* is at some ones Pleasure, some Will, and Dispose that is not their own, but above it, *It goeth forth, and in that very day their thoughts perish*, concerning all things under the Sun; And this proportionably falls on all who are *Rich towards themselves, and not towards God*, Luke 12. 21.

4. By these words of our Lord and Saviour, there will come a great and sad review upon a Man's loss of his Soul; There is a survivor to this loss; that will have an earnest desire to this Soul, to this Self again, that will cry out, Where is that Thing that I may find out to give in Exchange, as a Reprizal for my lost, and undone Soul? And what is this Survivor, but the lost and undone Soul it self, reviewing, and looking back on it self, as so lost? So our Lord intends to intimate to us, by adding, as a Clap of Thunder, falling upon the Lost state of a Soul; What shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul? The words are spoken

spoken in a vehemency, or in a Passion of Anguish, Horrors and Despair, upon the sense of so miserable a Bargain.

Were it not for this after Account, a Man might please himself in this, if he could *Gain the whole World*, or make some Noble, as it might seem, Acquitt of it; That he had laid his Hand upon the Prize, as he said; *Hoc nobile Feci quod perii*, I have this satisfaction, that I have brought what I desired to pass, though I perish in it: But this so terrible Review, this so dear Repentance will sting and torment for ever; because such *Exchange* is not possible to be found; such an *Exchange* is neither to be found above nor below, which a Man may give in *Exchange for his Soul*. For when our Lord says, *What shall a Man give in Exchange for his Soul?* It is as if he should say, There is no such Possible to be found.

Here are two Questions then our Lord has put, which can no way be Answered, but by submitting to his Advice, To lose our Lives here that we may save them for ever, rather than to save them here and lose them for ever; by being put upon the necessity of seeking an *Exchange for our Souls* that cannot be found.

These things being thus premised, I will now state the sense of the Words, and so lay down the Proposition to be Discoursed.

In stating the sense of the Words, Three things are to be enquired into:

1. What is meant by a *Soul*?
2. What by a *Soul lost*?
3. What by an *Exchange for a Soul lost*?

1. That which is the shade and similitude, under which the Lord conveys his Divine sense of a *Soul*, is *Life*.

We know, all Taste and Enjoyment is by the benefit of *Life*; If you take away *Life*, Man to all Things here in the World is a Carcass, or lump of Clay; He cannot enjoy: For the Body, by which the Soul had any enjoyment here is so, and it is no other than a dead Body, and so cannot enjoy; Put all you can upon a Dead Body, it is all one to it; All the Funeral Pomp and State in the World, it knows nothing of; It does not joyce in it; It is not at all pleased; It is all one to it, to be conveyed down in the greatest silence to the Chambers of Darkness.

So in the very same manner, Let a Man have all the World; yet if his Life be taken from him, all that World becomes presently a Cypher, a Nothing to him, a perfect Darkness; In the Verse therefore before the Text, v. 25. the same word is used for Life, that is in this Verse of the Text, v. 26. Translated Soul. *Whoſoever will ſave his Life, ſhall loſe it; and he that will loſe his Life for my ſake ſhall find it.* *Psyche* is the word uſed, the very ſame word, *What is a Man priſtied, if he ſhall gain the whole World, and loſe his own Life?* For then the whole World is nothing to him. Or *what ſhall a Man give in exchange for his Life?* Becauſe it is ſo well known, All the World cannot buy back Life, if it be once gone. This is the Shade our Lord uſes.

2. The word *Soul* is to be underſtood yet more ſtrictly and cloſely, for the very *Soul* and *Immortal Spirit*; becauſe that indeed is the very Power and Principle of Life in every one of us: It is not the Body, nay, it not that very Glorified Body of the Reſurrection; It is not that does primarily, or originally enjoy, or take in Happineſs; but it is that happy and bleſſed Spirit that ſhall be in that Glorified Body, and therefore the Apoſtle calls it a *Spiritual Body*; that is, a Body every way fitted for the Uſe, and to the Service of the Spirit: If any one therefore ſay to himſelf, I have a Being within me, that acts in all the Members and Powers of my Body, that ſees in my Eye, and hears in my Ear, that taſts, and feels, and apprehends all Things, and has the whole power of Reſentment within it ſelf, either as to Happineſs or Miſery; and that this Being ſurvives even to Eternity, a Reſenting Being, that carries all our Reſentment, our Apprehenſion; If this Being that cannot dye, be loſt, it muſt be loſt, by loſing that which is the Life of it ſelf, that is, the Happineſs and Bleſſedneſs of the enjoyment of God, and the Love of him, and Likeneſs to him. If this Soul be then in a perpetual Torment, and for ever, How can it enjoy any thing?

As we may ſee perſons, that have all the things of this World about them, if they have a Spirit ſunk into Trouble, Diſquier, Ho-or, Melancholly, which is a loſt ſtate in this World; a Poor Man that hath not the Thouſandth part of what ſuch a one hath, ſhall yet enjoy much more than he: Such a one, ſaith Solomon, *Eats in darkneſs*, as it were in a Dungeon. How much more when a Spirit comes into its own proper ſtate; and find nothing within, nor without it ſelf ſuitable to it, but all

con-

contrary to its Life and Peace ; For it is granted to Souls here to be in a state of Probation, and Tryal, under the Grace of the Mediator, and to some such degrees of enjoyment of the Creation of God, that they do not feel, at least to such extremity the loss of themselves, and the Horror of that state of being lost, although they are daily losing their Souls in what of this World they enjoy ; This is generally, and even almost universally vouchsafed, because God looks upon Mankind through that object of Love, that Son of His Love, to see whether they will return to him on the Principles of his Grace ; he endures therefore with Patience, and much Long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction, or while they fit themselves to it : And this, and the Dealings of God with such, is one of the great Mysteries of his Providence and Government of the World by the Mediator.

3. *Soul* often in Scripture Language, signifies the whole Person, as in the *Acts of the Apostles*, besides the *Old Testament*, The number of them that believed were so many Souls, or Persons, that is, Spirits in Bodies ; and so certainly Christ here means : In a parallel Scripture therefore, *Luke 9. 25.* It is said ; *What is a Man profited, if he Gain the whole World, and lose himself, or be cast away ;* Our Lord is here speaking of a Man, as I intimated, under the resemblance of a Merchant, adventuring himself by Sea in the pursuit after Riches : Now saith Christ, If such a one Gain the whole World by the Adventure, and lose himself, What has that Man got by all his undertaking ; So if a Man lose himself in that Great State of the Resurrection ; of the Kingdom of Christ, at the Glory that is to come ; If he shall be then in a pitiful, forlorn, despised state, an undone, sorrowful Being, a Person Removed from all enjoyment, and that he knows, and finds himself so ; *What will it profit* such a one, to have gained the whole World, and to be in that lost State ?

And that our Lord intended this very state of the Resurrection, and of every Man's self in that state, is plain by his going on, and declaring the Son of Man's coming in the Glory of the Father, with the Holy Angels, and Rewarding every Man according to his works ; and then shall every one know, and feel the loss of himself, who has thus Lost himself. So *Souls*, is us'd for *Persons* in the First Resurrection, *Rev. 29. 4.*

2. By all that hath been spoken, it appears what the Loss of a Soul is ; It is a loss from Holiness, Happiness, and Blessedness :
which

which *Loss*, the *Gain* of the *whole World* can never *Recompense*.

3. An *Exchange* for a *Lost Soul*, is some way or means of *Recovering* a *lost Soul* into a state of Holiness and Happiness, in the enjoyment of God, Likeness and Conformity to Him: And this it is the *lost Soul* will so earnestly cry out for, and that cannot be found.

The Proposition I lay down is this: The *Loss* of a *Man's Soul*, is a *Loss* so exceeding great, and the *Exchange* of Redemption, or for the Recovery of it, if once *lost*, so impossible to be found, That when all this comes (as it shall certainly be) to be clearly understood, and deeply Repented; It will fully appear, To have *Gain'd the whole World*, much less any part of it, at such a Rate, as the *Loss* of the *Soul*, cannot yield the least allay to the Bitterness arising from such a *Loss*, but will exceedingly increase it; For a Man shall come to those loud Complaints and Ejulations, those *weepings*, *wailings*, and *gnashings of Teeth*; when he finds he hath lost that into Misery, that hath all the Feeling, Judgement of Good, or Evil, Happiness, or Misery; the whole power of Enjoyment or Repentment within it self; That he hath lost himself, his whole self, or person, Then will he cry out, Oh! who will give me a Ransome for my *Soul*? for my *Self*? where shall I have it? He goes up to Heaven, down to Hell, he searches the whole Creation to find it; Where shall I find, saith he, what will be taken in *Exchange* for a *lost, undone Soul*? For who can make his Bed in the Torments of a *Wounded Spirit*, scorching worse than Flames? Who can dwell with the *Devouring Fire*, the *Consuming Anger* of the *Living God*? or with the *Everlasting Burnings* of an *Enraged Conscience*?

To make out this in full Discourse, and Argument, I propose Three Heads:

1. To shew, That if a Man could dye with the *whole World* in his Hand, he would be a *Lost Man* on this Account, That the World could be no provision for him, or the least suitable in that True and Everlasting Self; his *Soul*, as in the state of *Separated Spirits*; or *Himself*, in the state of the *Resurrection*; and so he must be *Lost* on that Account.

2. That this *Lost State* cannot be slumbered away in silence, but he must, and shall come to those vehement searches, after some *Exchange* for a *Lost Soul*, and *Self*; and there being none to be found

found, those searches must needs turn into Rage and Fury upon their so dreadful disappointment.

3. I shall therefore enquire into the way of losing a Soul according to our Lords present scope, and drift of Discourse; because if we closely attend, we shall find it out of the Road of our Common Thoughts.

And unto all these, I will subjoyn the most pressing Applications, that so naturally flow from those Heads, fully open'd, and enlarg'd upon:

I begin with the First; The True, Real, Solid Sense and Reason of Things, that none of us can deny; That a Soul must needs be lost that hath no Provision, but the *World*, though it were the *whole World*; that is; If such a Thing could indeed be: And though I must humbly acknowledg, *I am no way sufficient for these Things*, or the mighty considerations pertaining to this Subject; yet they themselves are so great, that if they be extracted out of all Discourse, and be but felt in, and by themselves, they must needs prevail in our Thoughts; the Holy Spirit thereunto working in us mightily.

1. There is no Comparison between a Man's Soul, a Man's Self in the Height, and Depth, the Breadth and Length of his *True Being*, his *True Self*, and the *World*, though it were the *whole World*; A Being Apprehensive of God, capable of enjoying Him, capable of Eternal Things, of *Righteousness*, *Peace*, and *Joy in the Holy Spirit*.

For what Compare can there be between a Being prepared with Sentiments, and Capacities for these Things, and the narrow and pent up notions and dimensions of our selves, as Creatures, that eat such Meat, and drink such Drinks, that wear such Cloaths, and dwell in such Houses, or Appartments, have such an Equipage and Retinue? So widely different is the proportion between the *World*, and an *Immortal Spirit*, an *Immortal self*: For the *World* is suited only to those low Notions and Apprehensions of a Man's Self, and it can extend no further: So that the Spirit, and True Self of a Man even now, in this State, in this Body finds a want in the greatest abundance of these Things, and cries out upon them all, *Vanity and vexation of Spirit*; and though it be huddled up, and muffled, and kept quiet by all Arts imaginable, yet it complains, and inwardly mourns to it self; because it hath not the true satisfaction, and enjoyment; the *Fibres* (as I may so speak) of the *Spiritual Stomach* and

Appetite, are so often twitched with the hunger of something more Excellent and Divine; I mean, Those deep and inward Sentiments, We are made for higher enjoyments than of this World, often stir and move do what we can to the contrary. And if it be thus now, much more will this be in that future state, when a *Soul* will be fully explicated, unfolded, let out into its utmost Capacities; Then will all the World plainly appear to be no other than the fitting the Coat of an Infant to a Giant; Oh! how much too wide, and too large is that true Self for all these, too extensive to be so provided for! To tell an Immortal Spirit, or a Man risen from the Dead, of Meat, and Drink, and sumptuous Cloathing, of Houses, Estates, and Money; you speak, I may say, Infinitely below the Dignity, and Majesty of such a Being: It will say to the World, *All these thy things perish with thee*; That thou couldst think I could be provided for by them, or that Eternal Things could be purchased with them!

Oh, that therefore now, we could say to our selves, Can I think of God, of Christ, of his Spirit, of Eternal Happiness, or Misery? Have I Thoughts that can embrace such Things as these! Am I great enough for such Thoughts? Can I think of enjoying God, and Living in the purest intercourses of Reason, and Holiest Understanding? Can there be an interview between my Spirit and the *Father of Spirits*, God in Christ? and do you talk to me of such poor and low things as are first most proper to Beasts, and Creatures of Sense only? the food of Brutes; the meat of Worms; and to me only in that low state and part wherein I am allied to them.

I know how very hard it is for us in this low Carnal state, to take in the Reason of this, as it were vain to entertain Beasts with the Discourses of *Mathematicks*, of Reason, or of *Virtue*; And hereby the Children of Men may know themselves to be but Beasts, as Solomon speaks; a higher kind of Beasts: And it were well for them, if their *Spirits*, who have thus conversed in Body, might be suffered to go downward, as Beasts; so indeed, such Men would have them do when they come to dye: But this cannot be, as God said to the *Israelites*, They would fain have been as the *Heathen Families*, but He would Bring them under the Bond of the Covenant of *Israelites*, of those He called his People; so such would fain be as the Beasts; But this shall not be, God will bring them under the Law of Spiritual and Everlasting Beings, and of the Family of never dying Spirits.

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Let us but a little Appeal to our own Minds, and put them a while into their own Action, into their own proper Exercise; and we shall find in their Enquiries after God, after Righteousness, after the enjoyment of him in the Blood, and Redemption of Jesus Christ, and the operations of his Spirit; That they are made for these Things: And how poor then will all the things in this World appear to be, when we come to the height of this Action and Activity.

And though we take so much pleasure and delight in these now, yet seeing we can rise up to higher things, and frame notions of them, it is certain we are made for those higher things, and they must be our state for ever; For it is certain, this is a great Rule and Maxime, By the most excellent part in every Thing, is its proper and lasting Good, to be known and judged of. It is therefore our Degeneracy, and Depravedness, or to speak the most Favourably and Charitably, It is our *Childishness*, and *Imperfection*, that we are so pleased; and that we have not Higher, Greater, Larger, more Constant Thoughts in the highest Things; as the Apostle says, *When I was a Child, I thought as a Child, I spake as a Child, I did as a Child; but when I became a Man, I put away Childish things from me.* Men look upon the things of their Childhood with great disdain, and so put them away from them, as nothing to them; when they come to be Men they change both their overvalue of Trifles, and their undervalue of Weightier things, they then had; This indeed, the Apostle speaks of our Highest Attainments in Grace here; and it is hardly allowable to apply it to the Case we are upon; but in a charitable Condescension to our weakness, it may be alluded to: But it is most certain, when we come to know what the enjoyment of God is, what it is to *drink of the River of his pleasures*; when he *shows us the Path of Life, when we come to his Presence*, where is *fulness of Joy*, and to the *Pleasures of his Right Hand*, that are for evermore; What Trifles will all these things appear to us! And on the other side, even the sorrows of a lost state, will make us see what empty Vanities they all were: On both sides then, Oh, with what a despisal shall we look upon the things we are so fond of now, that we have been so endear'd to here! Those things, that if we cannot have them, we, as *Amnon*, are ready to *die for*, we shall then with Scorn and Hatred, put out, and shut the door upon. If we could really think, with what an Eye Angels and Saints look upon those things we make such a do with, that take up our time, and we call Great Business;

How do we say such a Time, we must take care of: such an Ornament for the Body, such a Provision for our Table, such Conveniencies, and Furniture for our Houses, such a concern of Trade, such a settlement of our Revenue! and these are things that pass for great things, as we think them now, especially Trade, Estate, or such like; For even some of these, wise Men count Trifles now, and despise those who are taken up about them; But even the highest, the weightiest of them, when we come to understand them in another World, we shall wonder how we could lay out so many thoughts upon them, in the neglect of things so much greater, that concern our much more worthy Selves, in our Spirits, in our Immortal State: With what admirable Divine Eloquence therefore Solomon says, *Happy is the Man that findeth wisdom, and the Man that getteth understanding; For the Merchandise of it is better than the Merchandise of Silver, and the gain thereof, than of fine Gold: She is more precious than Rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared to her; Length of days in her Right Hand, and in her Left Hand, Riches and Honour; Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace; She is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold upon Her; and Happy is every one that retaineth her, Prov. 3. 13, 14, &c.* Here now is the Provision proper to Immortal Spirits, to the state of the Resurrection of the dead, and if we have Wisdom in degree, and preparations to that Great State now, these things will be our Choice.

There is a solemn Inquiry, *Job 28. 12. Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding? Man knoweth not the price thereof; neither is it found in the Land of the Living; The Depth saith, It is not in me; and the Sea saith, It is not in me; that is, it does not Rise from the Riches of the Earth, nor from the Treasures of the Sea: It cannot be gotten for Gold, neither shall Silver be weighed for the price of it; It cannot be valued with the Gold of Ophir; with the precious Onyx, nor the Sapphire stone; The Gold and the Chrysol cannot equal it, and the exchange of it shall not be for Jewels of fine Gold. No mention shall be made of the Coral, or of the Pearl, For the price of Wisdom is above Rubies.* Thus the Spirit of God is pleased to go on like an Orator, and to shew us, that the whole World is not worth one Soul; and therefore it is not worth Wisdom, that Wisdom to Salvation of Souls; and without which Souls are lost, For He that sinneth against Wisdom, wrongeth his own Soul; All they that Hate it, Love death. Thus the whole World is Inventoried, as it were; Its chief Riches are weighed, and found too Light for Wisdom,

dom. In the same manner, there is a sad Reflection on the *Misery of Lost Souls*, For *Death and Destruction* say, *we have Heard the Fame thereof with our Ears*; a most lively, and elegant expression of the state of *Lost Souls*; who in two regards may be said to have *Heard*, or to *Hear the Fame thereof with their Ears*.

1. They that are *Lost*, and in a state of *Death and Destruction*, had, while in this *Life*, *Heard the Fame of Wisdom with their Ears*, in those Discourses of the Gospel, in that *Law written in our Hearts* in many motions of Conscience; &c. but *despised all its Counsel*, and would have none of its *Reproof*; so they only *Heard the Fame*, but never *Received*, or *Entertained Acquaintance* with it; It was never as their *Sister*, or *Kinswoman*, as *Solomon* speaks, in intimacy with them: *Christ* is said, in this very sense, to have *Preach'd* of old to the *Spirits, lost Spirits*, now in *Prison*; So *Death and Destruction* have *Heard the Fame* of it with their *Ears*.

2. The *Fame* of it comes near to them; They *Hear it with their Ears*, but cannot come at it; as *Dives* in *Hell*, *Hearing the Fame* of the *Wisdom of Repentance to Salvation*, desir'd his *Brothers* might take that *Benefit* of it, which he had lost, and could make no purchase of, no *Exchange* for it, out of all that *World* he had had. *Death and Destruction* can find no *Exchange* for a *Soul*, because they have nothing to give in *Exchange* for *Wisdom*: Thus this Expression is parallel to our Saviour's, *What shall a Man give in exchange for his Soul?*

And thus now, 'Tis evident, The *World*, and all the things of it, are no more *Commensurate* to the *Greatness* of a *Soul*, or of an *Everlasting Self*, in all its *Offertures*, than as if *Man* should say He would make a *Garment* for the *Sun*; though never so *Rich* and *Beautiful* a *Garment*, you know it could bear no proportion to the *Beauty and Excellency* of *Light*, or to the vastness of the *Orb* of the *Sun*: No more can all the *Riches*, *Pleasures*, goodly *Houses*, or *Divertisements* of the *World* extend to a *Soul*, or to a *Man* considered in his future State. The very *Quality* and *Dignity* of a *Being* made to be for ever, does so beyond all Expression, and Comparison exceed the *Quality*, and *Intrinsic value* of the *World*.

So that a man loses himself, and his Soul, while he lays out his thoughts, love, desire, and expends his Soul upon them; because they are only for the Soul to serve it self in some small measure upon, for its higher end now; but if it centers upon them, it is lost, for they are not worth that in any degree.

2. If after this enjoyment of the World then (suppose the longest time that can in any Reason, Example or Precedent be supposed) there comes on the eternal duration of an Immortal Spirit, a self in an everlasting state; A man cannot be profited, *that enjoys the whole world, and loses his Soul.* For if a Soul be immortal, and for ever, then the State of that Soul and Spirit must be immortal and for ever also; And then if the World be all the Provision that is made for it, it cannot but be Lost upon that account, because the World can be a portion for it only in this Life. Whether therefore a man lose his Soul by his bad ways of gaining the World; or whether he lose his Soul by having made no provision for it, but only the World, there can be no profit to a man, but extreme loss by *gaining the World*, because he loses his Soul for it: For if this Soul be lost notwithstanding all the World can do to help it, it is all one to the man whether he have the World, or have it not: For a Soul lost, is for ever lost, or else it is not *lost* at all, and if the World cannot redeem that loss, what is a man the better for the World? it is still the same thing: Or if the *Soul* be lost by having no provision for it but the World, and the World cannot go into Eternity with it, and that so it being lost and miserable, *What can it profit a man to have gain'd the whole world, and lose his soul?* The World leaves him in the time of his greatest extremity. Oh how then will our Immortal Spirit reproach us, or it self? For man by his Soul or Spirit hath such a power of self reflection, of self charge and condemnation, and in this state it will exercise it to the height: It will say; What do you make Provision for me, for a moment, for a minute, in comparison; for a span long, for a hand breadth of time, when I must endure Ages of Ages? is this the love you have for an Immortal Spirit, to make such provision for it, that is, to endure and last a Line parallel to Eternity it self. and you have provided for it, comparatively, as but for an hour, a day, a minute? would not a Child say to a Parent that should make provision for it but for a day, a month, a year, that we may suppose in a course of nature, and common providence, may live many years; Is this the love

love you have for me, to make provision but for so short a time?

Oh with how much greater reason, force and sting will our Souls say to us! How is it that when you understood I am prepared for Everlasting, you have only laid up for me for the short time of this Life? *For whose shall those things be*, you have provided? you know they cannot be mine, I cannot carry them with me; or if I had all the World, it could do me no good, it could not redeem my loss in this Eternal State, I must go out naked notwithstanding them. Oh let us therefore always remember the Words Scripture sounds so often in our ears; *Everlasting, Eternal, for ever, always to come*; as Matt. 25. 24, &c. *Come ye blessed of my Father; inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, &c.* And on the other side; *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*; And *these go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.* Oh that every one of us, both speaking and hearing could deeply consider this; I am to be for ever, and therefore what do you speak to me of things that are to be only for a short time?

And if it be for posterity, that we are urged; even that is but a Notion of this World, and of this Life; though it look big, and sound great, and carry a fair and honourable pretention, and men upon it call their Lands after their own Names, and their Posterity indeed approve their Sayings. All this, notwithstanding the Spirit of God says; *This their way is their folly.* And when men come into an Eternal Condition, this Bubble falls; there are no such Notions there; For, says Job, *their Sins come to honour, and they know it not*; and *they are brought down, and they perceive it not of them*; But *their Flesh upon them has pain, and their souls within them mourn*: That is, A man has not the least abatement of the black and mournful state of a lost Soul by it. We should therefore say; Shall I be miserable for ever, that I may leave an Estate to my Family? Shall I be miserable to Eternity? Thus I may entail upon my Posterity, what I shall in my own Eternal self have no more relation too; than a Stranger, and yet be in misery for so forecasting for my Posterity:

It is certain the Tongues of Angels and men is not enough to express this thing according to the weight of it. Indeed Words are nothing alone, but as they are subordinate to the Divine Spirit pressing the things themselves; For things press close, and make a strong impression upon the heart, Mind, and Affections, when so set home.

Oh

Oh therefore that I might be the Minister of God, to utter Things to you; and that he would enable you to take things to your selves out of all Expressions and Words; that in all this case we may not be prevail'd upon by vain Fantasies and appearances from this World, and the Scheme or Guise of it, and find no weight, force nor Authority in things so solid and real. For whether we will hear, or forbear, it is certain this carries the greatest Reason; That we should not incur an Eternal Loss for a momentary and present Interest. This is according to all the Reason in the World.

3. From hence it follows, that all appearances in this World, and in the out-side happiness and prosperity of it, any further than it is subordinated to the supreme ends of the glory of God, and of our Eternal Salvation, is happiness, welfare, prosperity, enjoyment only in a disguise, in Masquerade, or as on a Stage.

Now if an Actor on a Stage should forget what he really is, because he acts the part of a King, or any great Personage, because he is under such an Appearance and Character in a Play, and think himself to be such a one, how great would the Delusion and Intoxication be? And such is the Fascination, and as I may justly call it, the Fanaticism, and Ecstusiasm the business and enjoyment, and enrichments of this World transport men into: They make them forget what a little and short interest men have in this World; how far from an indefeasible state of Inheritance as they love to speak, a Term, not so much as for Life, That is, a Provision so long as we are to be, and to live: For this (as we have seen) is to Eternity, not so much as a Term for years, which is a time certain; whereas *This night our souls may be required of us;* and then *what shall those things be, we have provided?* All therefore we do or speak, or magnifie our selves in though upon any thing in this World, is but so much Theatre, Farce and Masquerade, as to all that arises from this World.

And thus much we might learn from the Stage: Herein we are more foolish than those Actors, however their Profession is justly more despicable than of the poorest Mechanick, or Day-labourer; that they do not think themselves to be what they act, but know their true State and Character, and use those Theatrical Garments and Representations for a real support of themselves and their Families, and consider in the midst of all those feigned Appearances, their true Necessities at home. Even thus, as Christ instructs us, should we *make to our selves Friends of the mam-*
mon

mon of Unrighteousness, make improvement of all we seem to be heer, that when we fail from all these, we may be received to Everlasting Habitations.

But alas, how generally do we value our selves by our acquitting our selves, as upon a Theatre; we give our selves a secret Applause, as we are Men of Mode, as we have behaved our selves in our Business, Trade, Appearance in Courts of Judicature, in the Courts of Princes, in such or such Company; and *Men will praise us, when we do*, as they think, *well for our selves* in these things, because they are like unto us: We think our selves, what we are in Acting, and forget that true Self at home, that, though it be indeed the Noble and Princely part, the Lasting and Eternal part, the only True and Real Self, yet is put under the disguise of a Slave; But, oh! how amazed shall we be, when that Self starts out, and appears like it self; and we have lost it for a Thing, a Life, a Being, a Happiness, so only in a Vizor! Oh! How will this Amaze and Torment us for ever! when in vain we shall cry out, I never knew, nor thought my self to be such a one, as I now find my self; and as Christ says; So is *He that lays up Treasure for Himself*, under so false a Masque of self, and is not *Rich towards God*, and his True Self; so shall we find it: Such Fools, such *Enthusiasts*, heated with vain and worldly Imagination shall we be found. And yet dayly are seen such *Servants on Horseback*, false Selves set aloft; and *Princes*, the True Self, the Immortal Soul made to *walk on Foot*.

Thus the Spirit of God, setting out the State of wicked Men in the World, *Isal. 73*. He sets it out, as in this Masquerade, till the Disguize and Vizor be pulled off; *There are no Bands in their Death*, but their *Strength is firm*. They dye oftentimes (as they say) in the Bed of Honour, with all Advantages about them without fear of what's to come: *They are not in Trouble as other Men, neither are they Plagued as other Men*; Therefore *Pride compasseth them about as a Chain* (He means) of Gold. They take state upon them, as great Princes, or Magistrates, with their Rich Collars, their Chains of Gold; *Violence covereth them as a Garment*, They take Power, and Command to themselves, to enforce their pleasure; *Their Eyes stand out with fatness*, They carry Great Port, and Prefence, as we speak; *They have more, than*

heart could wish; They are corrupt, and speak wickedly; Concerning Oppression they speak loftily, Who dares undertake them? Who can attack them, or make War with them? They speak Great and Big, as if Heaven and Earth was their own; They set their Mouth against the Heaven, and their Tongue walks through the Earth. These are the ungodly prospering in their way. This looks very great for a Time; but it is all but as on a Stage; It is all Stage-Play, However, Good Men are ready to be troubled at it, as if it were real; But I did but go, saith the Psalmist, to the House of God, then understood I their end; I saw the end of the Play, and it ends as we say in a Tragedy; All Horror at the last; Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; Thou castedst them down to destruction; How are they brought into desolation in a moment? They are utterly consumed with Terrors.

I am fully assured, All the Wit of Man could never have reached this height; no Poetry, no Ode; only the Spirit of God, who perfectly knows, and speaks Things, Things so great as to find themselves such loughy and massy Words, when understood, as the Divine Spirit understands them.

How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with Terrors; As soon as they are got but never so little on that side the Line, beyond this World, They are All in Desolation and Terror. As a Dream when one awaketh; so, Oh Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their Image. All their State here is but Dream and Image, meer Stage Appearance, Masquerade and Disguise.

To bring all this home then to what we should be and do, according to the same Psalmist; We should acknowledg our Bruisishness and Folly, in being at all concerned with such Spectres of Happiness, losing in the mean time their Precious Immortal Selves: We should resign our selves wholly to Divine Conduct, To be led by his Counsel, till we are brought to his Glory; We should look wholly to and for him, Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none on Earth I desire beside thee; &c. All fails, even a whole World; All, except God alone; All far from him perish: It is good then for us to draw near to him, that we may declare the wonders of his Power in his Grace to us, Setting us before his Face for ever.

I come

I come to the second Head, to shew you, in what way according to our Saviours Discourse, and the scope of it, we come to lose a Soul; For this is a very critical Point, and that, if closely applied, would try us, as by a *Jealousy Water*, whether we are Christ's or not? I shall endeavour to be very brief in it, though the Things themselves require vast, and largest Discourse.

Now therefore I must tell you, that we, even *Protestants*, are under the name of Christians and Protestants, a very Degenerate Race: We end, where Christianity in its own True, Genuine, and Transcendent Powers begins. For Christianity either finds Men Sober, and, as we speak, of Good Lives, as the *young Man* in the Gospel, that was *Lovely* in the Eyes of Christ for all Moral Accomplishments, *Matt. 19.* compar'd with *Mark 17.* or it presently makes them so, as *Zaccheus* and other Converts, and then it plants them with its nobler Principles, and Operations: It takes for granted, no gross Impieties, or Immoralities should be amongst them, not so much (as the Apostle says) as once named among them, as *Become Saints*; but then it hath much higher Graces, Powers and Actions to Communicate to them; whereas among us, if a Man be no Swearer, Professed Prophane Person, no sordidly Covetous Person, Defrauder, or Oppressor, Talks, and Lives Soberly, and Joyns in the Duties of Publick Worship, and Acknowledgment of God, we are ready to say, This is an Excellent Man: But this was not so in the Eye of Christ; For He in his manner of Discourse, and Preaching came to the Sober and Moral Men, and our Men of Good Lives, our Religious Men, and that distinguish themselves from the Lewd and Irreligious: Now saith Christ to such, whom we are ready to think very very safe, Take heed you are not the Persons *losing your Souls*; though you do it with a great deal of Gravity, Soberness, and Becomingness in the World; and under such a profession of Christianity and Protestantcy, that no one should so much as dare to question your Salvation; Lest He offend and scandalize you, and discourage All from being Christians; as the *young Man*, who went away sorrowful, discouraged, and as we speak, disobliged, knocked off from the Doctrine of Christ; and staggering the very Disciples, who cried out, *Who then can be saved!*

I will therefore lead you into the occasion of these words of our Lor'ds; *What is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World, and lose his Soul, &c?* In this Chapter, v. 21. Began Jesus to shew to his Disciples, that he must go up unto *Jerusalem*, that Head City, and Seat of the Jewish Religion, and the Doctors of it, the Elders, Chief Priests, and Scribes that held the Standard of it; of whom He must suffer many Things, and be killed, and Raised again the Third Day; I must (saith he) be Mocked, I must be Buffeted, I must be Spit upon, I must be Laughed at, and Drolled upon; and I must dye that ignominious death of a Slave, of a great Criminal, and Malefactor; But I shall Rise again the Third Day.

Now Peter looking not at all upon the Rising the Third Day, but letting that pass for a Phantasy, a Thing in the Clouds, as we do All Discourse of the Kingdom of Christ at this Time; else that might have Reconciled him: But He, altogether intent upon the Suffering part, began to take Christ to task, and to Rebuke him, saying, *Be it far from thee, Lord; This shall not be unto thee*, Let not this thing be once thought of, That such a Person as Thou art should be thus Treated, *Deal more mercifully with thy self*; For Thou who canst do all things, canst hinder it if thou pleasest: But Christ turned to Peter, and with an unusual severity said to him, *Get thee behind me Satan; For Thou savourest not the Things that be of God, but those that be of Men.*

Then he adds, This is a Thing, I am so far from being turn'd off from, that I establish it, as a Rule for All my Disciples; *If any Man will come after me, as my Disciple, Let him deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow me*; in all this I have represented upon my self. And if any Man think much of this, and chuses rather to save his Life, such a one shall lose it; but He that loses his Life thus for my sake, shall find it.

All this is, as if Christ should say, I do not only say, you must leave your Debaucheries, the Gross Pride, and Vanities of this World; but you must come to that to be willing to lose your Lives, you must Take up your Cross, do that, the Nature of Man so much abhors.

Now,

Now, as Peter having such a Love to Christ, said, *Let it be far from thee*; so we are ready to say too, looking upon our selves, or any other, a Man of Condition, a Man of Quality, as we speak; what, you come to *Take up your Cross*, to *deny your self*, to go lower in the World! This shall not be. But Christ is positive; If any Man, when required by me, to *lose his Life*, will *save it*, He shall lose it; But if any will *lose his Life*, to required by me; He shall *find it* in a higher Life, as I shall find my Life the *Third Day*. Now, saith Christ, *Life and Soul*, are, you know, the Power and Measure of all enjoyment; and if you *lose your True Life, Soul, Self*, though you *gain the whole World*, what do you get by it? But beyond this, If you come to Repent so great a Loss, and to cry out, *What shall I give as an Exchange*, a Ransom for that Soul, that Life lost, and no such can be found? How Miserable will you be! Here is the very Reason, and Thread of our Lord's Discourse.

And herewith agree all his Discourses on this subject; Let us take them in the Gospel Verity and Purity, the very words of Christ, *Luke 14. 35*. There were *Great Multitudes following Christ*; Many were taken with the Excellency of his Discourse, with the Majesty of his Holy Conversation, and Miracles; But he turned to them, and saith, I would not have you mistake me, *If any Man come after me, and hate not his Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, &c. and his own Life also, He cannot be my Disciple*; And therefore (saith he) Consider well, and the Point of Consideration He sets out by two close similitudes: Implying, Christianity undertaken in the Truth of it, is like *Building a Tower*, which he that does, had need *sit down first*, and *count the charge*; and it is like beginning a War, in which equal Power is to be well stated; lest otherwise All end in scorn and Ruine. So saith He, Whoever undertakes to be a *Christian*, to be my Disciple, must first consider, whether he can bear it out.

I say, To be a *Christian*; For Christ saith, Disciple, and we generally say *Christians*; And, indeed, by Oracle, as from Heaven the Disciples were called *Christians*, *Acts 11. 26*. So to be a Disciple, and to be a *Christian* (however the word, Disciple, be become a word of scorn among us) is the same thing. Now if any Man will be a *Christian*, here are the Terms of it, and we must

must drop the very Name of Christian, if we are not thus prepar'd; And yet who is thus prepar'd?

Take another Scripture, *John 12. 2, 4.* Christ considering his own dying, compares the thing to a *casting a Corn of Wheat into the ground*; *Verily, verily, saith Christ, except a Corn of Wheat fall into the Ground, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit: He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal.* Here is the plain sense of losing Life, or a Soul, when we lose Life Eternal; and to lose that with the gain of a Life, that the *whole world can make great*, is a loss wholly unaccountable, intollerable, and irremediable, notwithstanding the most passionate desires of an exchange, or remedy, which shall ever enflame the loss.

Now a *Corn of Wheat*, saith Christ, to this purpose, *except it die, abides alone*; it can never be any more than a Corn of Wheat; and at last, as such, it putrifies; but if it be *cast into the ground*, and die, it rises in all the flourish of Nature.

So if a man say, He'll be this great man, this rich man, this man of Power and Honour, this man of Mode and pleasure in this World, and adventure for what is to come; say what you will, saith he, I will not diminish from the Figure I am, or can hope or attain to make.

Why, if so, saith Christ, you may, as you can, be that Figure, but you shall never be any more; and when you come to die, what becomes of that Figure? And besides, beyond that, *viz.* when That Figure is to be no more; there arises the Loss of a Soul, and of Life Eternal; which is beyond all expression, a Loss dreadful, and without any reprisal, or recovery.

And to this very purpose is that so known Discourse of the Apostle *James*; Thus the Truth of that Faith which justifies, appears by the mighty Operations of it in self-denial, self resignation, and of all our Interests in this World, as *Abraham* and *Rahab* made: Such Acts of Faith, as the Apostle gives a Catalogue of, *Heb. 11.* by which the Elders obtained so great, so good a Report; which if well consider'd, would much abate the Controversial part of that Scripture; the Apostle being not in discourse

upon

upon the constant Ordinary Works of Moral Obedience, but of those Heroick Acts opposing to the Body of Profession that mighty Spirit of *Justifying Faith*, giving up all to God and Christ.

I will therefore but name the Particulars, wherein this is to be shewn, that we are ready to forsake all to follow Christ.

I. It is certain, the very forsaking of all in the plain Letter, or Matter of Fact, was the Case for three hundred years and more, after the Resurrection of Jesus Christ; it was so dispos'd by the Supreme Lord of Time, if a man would be Christ's Disciple, if he would take up him to be a Christian at that time, he must undervalue for the sake of Christ, the whole World, and all Relations and Interests in it, or else he could not be so: So that this was continually brought to the Beame, to the Scale, whether a man's own Soul, or the whole World weigh'd most?

Indeed after three hundred years, and something more, the *Kingdom of Christ* made some appearance in the Christian Empire, and the Christians came to be in a Condition of Honour and Estate, and outward, prosperity; and the Bishops, and Hierarchy, as they call'd themselves, became the greatest of the Earth: But if we believe Ecclesiastick History, there was a Voice from Heaven at that time; *This day is Poyson diffus'd into the Church*: But whether that were so or not, certainly the thing was most true: For hence arose an Opinion That Christianity in such a low and impure state, as the World was then in, and hath continued in to this day, did yet advance to worldly honour and greatness; or that the profession of Christ and his Gospel, made men with no greater Influences of holiness appearing at the same time, great, and rich, and Lords, then which nothing is more contrary to the Kingdom of Christ, and which brought in *Antichristianism*, a mock Kingdom of Christ, immediately upon, and even out of the Christian Empire. But this was the State of what we call Antiquity before the Christian Empire, or the time of the purest Christianity; it was a laying down all at the foot of Christ.

2. It is certain every one of us ought to be prepared, to have a Mind Fixed, and ready to give up All to Christ; else we cannot be Disciples of Christ; suppose any of us have Advantages of Descent, of Place, of Estate, of Credit, of Reputation, of Great Abilities of Understanding, of all the Splendor of Living, Attendance, Equipage, Garb; If we cannot be willing to lay all this aside, for Christs sake, and to be wrapt up in the vilest Appearance, we cannot be Christs Disciples, and so cannot be Christians, For Disciples are called Christians by Oracle.

And as I said before of the *Christian Empire*, until it came in, there was nothing but Poverty, Persecution, Disgrace, and all the Torments the wits of *Pagans* could invent upon Christians; so in After Times, when *Antichristianism* came to a height, there was no enjoying the Purity of Christianity, but the Name of *Hereticks* Entitled all those, who would be Christians, not according, to what they call'd *Holy Church*, but according to the Gospel it self, to all the Cruelty, Persecution and Torments, the Heathen had before found out, and Practis'd upon Christians; which now *Antichristians* took up against sincere *Christians*: But for this last Age, and almost another to it, our *Reformation* hath brought in a greater Liberty of the *Protestant Profession*, and the same Honour, Titles and Grandieur on *Protestants*; But we had need take care we do not abuse it; For if we are not in the preparation of our Hearts, Dying, as a *Corn of Wheat*, we cannot, in the Sense of the great Master, and Founder of Christianity be his *Disciples* or *Christians*. And it is much to be consider'd, All things of Worldly greatness, and Enjoyment are still under this Perjudice, that the *Kingdoms of this World* are yet in *Beastian Hands*, of the Last of *Daniels Beastian Powers*, the Antichrist the Pope; so that the Succession of *Christ's Kingdom* cannot yet be *The Kingdoms of this World*; are not yet become the *Kingdoms of the Lord*, and of his *Christ*. It is therefore very observable, that Counterfeit of the *Kingdom of Christ*, as it is a *Mock Kingdom* in regard of the Worldly Grandieur, of *Popery*, *Cardinalls*, *Arch-Bishops*, *Bishops*; &c. So it hath served it self of the Counterfeit of the *Self Denial of the Gospel* in those *Austere*, *Self Denying Orders*, under such strict *Laws of Mortification*,
and

and Despisal of this World ; Both Teaching us, if we would Learn ; That there is indeed a Time of the Glory of Christianity in that Kingdom of Christ, but not Carnal and Worldly, yet full of outward Glory, and Enjoyment ; but that at the present All is in *Patience* and *Affliction*.

3. Every one ought at least to look to this, to see, what instances of Secret Mortification, Self Examination, Humiliation, and profoundest Abasement of Himself before God ; Self Condemnation in Sense of his own Unworthiness, and manifold Transgressions, with all the Aggravations of Them ; Self Denial, Holy Self-Resignation, he Lives in the Practice, and Exercise of ; laying our selves low at Christs Feet, bringing all the Glory to Christianity, and bringing as many into it, as we can, Seeking not our own, but the Things that are Jesus Christs. Suffering Affliction with the People of God in the State of our Minds ; and Contributing All we can to the necessities of Saints ; not Stretching our Selves, as on Beds of Ivory, Drinking Wine in Bowls, Chaunting to the Sound of the Viol and Organ, &c. and forgetting the Afflictions of Joseph ; Waiting, Longing for the Kingdom and Appearance of Christ. If such things as these are not in us, we are saving the Lives of a short Figure, and loosing our Souls, and the Life Eternal that are for ever, we are in a Dream, and making that Image, God, and Christ will suddenly Awake, and Despise.

As a Conclusion, and as an Addition to the Second Head, I will enquire into the meaning, and importance of that Vehement Question, signifying, that the loss of a Soul cannot be slumbred away, *What shall a man give in Exchange for his Soul ?* And it speaks these three Things.

1. Suppose that a Person could have the whole World in his Hand to give ; *It would be utterly Despised*, It would be of no value ; This must needs be so ; For if the World could be of value to Exchange for a Lost Soul, It must then needs have preserved the Soul from being Lost. For a Man therefore to come and say to God, here is the Estate I have gotten with the Loss of my Soul, here is the Great Revenew I have attain'd, and left to posterity ; Here are the years I have spent in pleasure, and that I was blessed upon Account of by all that lived about me, and Knew me ; Because I lived in Pomp and State, in All I could

desire, and did as the *Psalmist* Expresses it) well to my self; will this, if it could be All given Back, be an Exchange for a Lost Soul; no, the *Redemption of Souls is precious, and Ceases for Ever*, as to any such *Exchange*; will the Remembrance of it Appease an Angry God, or as Enraged Conscience? Alas, That will be the Burden, and sting of that Condition; as the Apostle *James* speaks; *Your Riches are Corrupted, and your Garments Moth-Eaten, your Gold and Silver are Cankered, and the Rust of them shall witness against you, and eat your Flesh, as it were Fire. You have heaped Treasure together for the Last Days*, James 5. 2, 3. &c.

2. Is there Any of the Creatures in Heaven or Earth, that can stretch out an Hand, or an Arm of Compassion in such a case, as this is of a Lost Soul? Are there any of the Angels, of the highest Principalities in Heaven, the *Thrones and Dominions* there, that can step in in a way of might, and tenderest Compassion, and say, Oh Soul, that art Lost, now will I help, now will I Interpose, and bring thee off from thy Lost State, and Rescue thee? Or any of the Saints that have known the Temptations of Human Nature on Earth, or known any Particular Lost Soul? Alas, This is all impossible, as it is said in *Job*, *Call now, if there be any that will Answer thee; and to which of the Saints wilt thou Turn?* Job 5. 1. They all Justify, and Glorify the Righteous Judgment of God in that lost State of the Person that hath undervalued his Soul; They praise the Mediator, by whom they themselves Consist, and the Redeemer, by whom they themselves are Reconciled; They dare not appear Mediators, or Invade the Honour of the one Mediator, but as they Praise and Adore free Grace in Christ to themselves, so they in Relation to those Dismal Appearances of the Lost, as it is expressed in *Ezekiel* c. 14. 22. are Comforted in what God hath done, *Beholding the Righteousness with which he hath done it; when they see the ways and doings of Lost Souls, and know that God hath not done without Cause All that he hath done unto them.*

3. When the Saviour, and Redeemer of Souls shall say, *What shall a Man Give in Exchange for his Lost Soul?* It is as if he should say, Do not look that I should be your Ransom, your Exchange; that your Ruine should be under my Hand, or I Rescue you from it; While you were in the World, I offered
you

you the wisest of my Counsel, I offered you the dearest and most precious of my Blood; And I said with tears, *Oh that in your day you would have known the things of your peace, but now they are hid-den from your eyes.* I am now removed from being a Saviour to you, I am now altogether at a distance from you, or from shewing you any compassion, as it is said, *Esay 27. 11. They are a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour;* So Christ will say, *They have been souls of no consideration, notwithstanding all I have said, therefore I have no Commission from my Father, no Authority to interceed for these Children of perdition;* Only for those he gave me, while in the World, I am no Redeemer of lost Souls on this other side of the Line of Life, and entred into Eternity.

Having now thus far insisted on this Point in a Doctrinal way, I close in brief with the particular Application.

Application 1. I would speak to the Atheist, that complains of the want of evidence and assurance of these things; I would speak to him as in his own Language, and would, to discourse with him say; There is not a certainty, I'll yield there is not such a blockish, bruitish kind of certainty as he requires, that should affect Stocks and Beasts; yet I cannot but observe to him, that after all his cavil against evidence, he cannot get rid, or quit and clear of that he has; I dare appeal to him, whether his own Conscience will not have the last word, that these things are so, however he be oblig'd not to confess it? But I would deal with him by way of proportion, upon our Saviour's Words in such a sense as he will allow; That a man gets nothing, tho he should gain the whole World, and *lose his life*, in that moment he gains it; I ask him in his way of certainty, What is that man the better? If then it be but possible, though not certain, there should be a Soul to rue the loss of it self in a Christian sense; he knows what he can get; All is but such a part of the World as he can get; it is but a World he hath nothing to do with when he dies; and there is this Bridle in his Jaws, do what he can, he cannot shake that off, he must die, he knows not how soon; and there remains a possibility of a Soul in a lost state, after all the World; What odds therefore does he give
against

against himself in making nothing of a Soul, for a little of the World, in a Life, that cannot with all it has defray the charge of living, the *vanity and vexation of Spirit* that certainly attends Life; and the certainty it must end, and wholly uncertain how soon; and yet he stands the hazard of a Soul miserable for ever, in its being lost, and for ever crying out for an exchange for it self that cannot be found, any more than he knows what to give in exchange for his life, if once lost. And why should he, of all persons, think a Soul miserable for ever an impossible thing, tho not certain, or so much as improbable; that thinks so many things have been, and are, that no one, as he thinks, can tell how they come to be; Sure that man that will believe nothing but upon sense, transgresses the very Law of his own Sense, that sees many things come to pass, he look'd not for, and will not believe, because he does not yet see; and against his own Prudentials upon Sense; for he takes heed, and guards against things possible, that he has never seen yet by the eye of Sense, why not then against this so dreadful possibility?

Application 2. If it be so desperate a case to *lose a soul for a whole world*, how great madness is the loss of a Soul for a little of the World? Men that live in Allyes and Dungeons, and *eat in darkness all their days*, and yet lose their Souls; Oh how earnest should all the poor be to receive the Gospel preached to them, as the most fit Subjects of it in that gracious Expression of Christ to them, *The poor are evangelized*; and to lay hold on Eternal Life, to make a Vertue of that Necessity they are under. On the other side, they that live in gaiety and splendor, and value it so much, and have such abhorring thoughts of a contrary condition, how earnest should they be to live so for ever, in a Divine Sense, being receiv'd into the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, and not to fall into the miseries of a *lost soul*, as so horrible a descent from their present state.

Application 3. Let me beseech you to take the things that have been conveyed to you in these Words, out of Words, and as things to weigh them well; for Things are greater than words, and cannot be deceived, or turn'd off any more than Mountains, or Walls, or Gates of Iron and Brass in our way: Let any one but for an hour think of these Words, he will find them rise up to him as Things, and meet him with inward assurances; and so let him

him often do, and especially with humblest supplication to the Father of Spirits, the Creator of Souls; through Christ the Lover and Redeemer of Souls; by the Spirit the blessed Inhabitant of all holy and wise Spirits; to impress upon him this great Oracle; concerning the value of Souls and Spirits; and he shall find by the Evidence, and witness within himself of the value of his own Soul, There is such a sense of these things possible to us, that he that hath *lost Houses, Lands, Wife, Children* for Christ's sake may receive a hundred fold in this life, even now, and in the very midst of Persecution, (which is the greatest evidence of their Reality,) in the comforts and assurances of preserving all unto Life Eternal: For Christ adds; In the world to come life eternal, *Mark* 10. 29, 30.

Application 4. Seeing things are so dark in the present smog; black Vapour, thick Steam of this World, and the Lusts thereof; and are so hardly considered, and weighed duly, in the noises and dust the rolling wheels of this World raise, Oh how earnestly desirous should we be of that day dawning, *that day of the Kingdom of Christ but dawning* from on high, that shall make all these things so clear, as to put the World into another state and posture, as towards God, and all holiness; and the more earnest should we be, seeing the day may by the *sure word of prophecy shining* in this dark place, be seen to be near approaching; and how great relation this great Saying of Christ hath to that Kingdom, appears, in that Christ goes on immediately to his coming in the Glory of his Kingdom; of which he gave a Type in the Transfiguration, *Chap. 17.* following.

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